

RHETORIC AND REALITY

The President's 2004 State of the Union Address

	Rhetoric	Reality	
Economy and Jobs	<p>“The tax relief you passed is working... Manufacturing activity is increasing... And jobs are on the rise.”</p>	REPUBLICAN FAILURE <p>Lost 3 million private sector jobs in the past three years, with only 1,000 jobs created last month. Refuse to extend UI benefits to help 4.6 million seeking work. Lost 2.6 million manufacturing jobs. Proposed tax incentives that would export manufacturing jobs overseas. Support elimination of overtime pay for 8 million Americans.</p>	DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY <p>Support incentives to help small businesses expand, investments in roads and mass transit, and a new tax cut for manufacturers that creates jobs here at home. Fully fund for Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Extend UI benefits for the long-term unemployed.</p>
Tax Cuts	<p>“For the sake of job growth, the tax cuts you passed should be permanent...[and] by limiting the growth in discretionary spending to less than 4 percent...we can cut the deficit in half over the next five years. ”</p>	REPUBLICAN FAILURE <p>About a third of the move from a \$3 trillion Democratic surplus to a \$6 trillion Republican deficit can be attributed to tax cuts, with this share rising over time. National deficit at record high of at least \$6 trillion over 10 years. Additional tax cuts will only worsen the deficit.</p>	DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY <p>Support targeted tax cuts for working families and a return to fiscal discipline. Our economic and tax cut plan would have created 1 million jobs without adding 1 penny to the deficit.</p>
Worker Training	<p>“So we must respond by helping more Americans gain the skills to find good jobs in our new economy.”</p>	REPUBLICAN FAILURE <p>Proposed \$1 billion cut in employment and job training programs over the past 3 years.</p>	DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY <p>Increase funding for employment and job training programs.</p>

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Medicare	“By strengthening Medicare and adding a prescription drug benefit, you kept a basic commitment to our seniors: You are giving them the modern medicine they deserve.”	REPUBLICAN FAILURE Allow HMOs and private insurers to decide what kind of drug benefit seniors get and how much they pay. Many seniors will be worse off: 2.7 million retirees lose their drug coverage. Prohibit Medicare from negotiating the best prices for seniors. Prevent Americans from getting lower priced drugs from other countries.	DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY Support a prescription drug plan that would let seniors choose their own doctors. Allow Medicare to negotiate drug discounts. Ensure that American consumers can benefit from the lower prescription drug prices in other countries.
Access to Health Care	“By keeping costs under control, expanding access, and helping more Americans afford coverage, we will preserve the system of private medicine that makes America’s health care the best in the world...[And] we must eliminate frivolous medical lawsuits.”	REPUBLICAN FAILURE 3.8 million people lost health insurance in the past three years. A \$1,000 tax credit for individual coverage covers only 1.9 million of 44 million uninsured and would undermine employer-based insurance. Support tort reform proposals that fail to lower insurance premiums and hurt patients who have been harmed by medical malpractice.	DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY Support assistance for small businesses to help them provide good health insurance to their workers. Support measures to reduce prescription drug prices and health care premiums for everyone. Support curbs on frivolous lawsuits but protect injured patients’ right to sue incompetent or negligent providers.
Environment	“I urge you to pass legislation...to promote conservation.”	REPUBLICAN FAILURE Cut funding for clean water and other environmental programs. Cut annual number of Superfund clean-ups by almost 50 percent. Refuse to hold polluters responsible for the damage they have done. Trying to open roadless areas in national forests to logging and open ANWR to drilling.	DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY Fighting to block GOP efforts to weaken the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. Protect national forests and oppose drilling in ANWR. Fully fund Superfund cleanups and reinstate “polluter pays” principle.

Rhetoric		Reality	
Social Security and Retirement Savings	“Younger workers should have the opportunity to build a nest egg by saving part of their Social Security taxes in a personal retirement account.”	REPUBLICAN FAILURE Spend the entire \$2.2 trillion Social Security Trust Fund surplus over 10 years on tax cuts for the wealthy. Support privatization of Social Security. Propose new tax shelters for the wealthy in lieu of real retirement savings plan for middle class families.	DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY Protect Social Security and oppose privatization. Strengthen retirement security by helping small businesses provide pension coverage, require companies that change their pension plans to protect older workers, and make sure that the same pension rules apply to executives and employees.
Education	“[T]he No Child Left Behind Act is opening the door of opportunity to all of America's children...We are providing more funding for our schools – a 36 percent increase since 2001.”	REPUBLICAN FAILURE Underfunded the No Child Left Behind Act by almost \$17 billion since the bill was passed, leaving millions of children without promised help with reading and math. Froze funding for Pell Grants and Perkins Loans.	DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY Fully fund the No Child Left Behind Act so that all children get the services promised. Increase the maximum Pell Grant to \$5,800 this year, doubling the HOPE Scholarship to \$3,000 per student, and make the HOPE tax credit refundable. Create incentives for colleges and universities to reduce costs.
Immigration	“My temporary worker program will preserve the citizenship path for those who respect the law...”	REPUBLICAN FAILURE Have failed to move bipartisan bills to help agricultural workers and students. New plan does not provide path to citizenship.	DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY Enact bipartisan immigration reform that respects our core values – family unity, fairness, and economic opportunity for all.

Rhetoric

Reality

<h3>Homeland Security</h3>	<p>“..[W]e must continue to give homeland security and law enforcement personnel every tool they need to defend us.”</p>	<p>REPUBLICAN FAILURE</p> <p>Froze the budget for homeland security, voted against Democratic amendments to add needed resources. Only 3% of cargo entering U.S. is inspected, and GOP failed to provide needed funds for Coast Guard. Fire departments have radios for only half of a shift, and breathing equipment for only one-third.</p>	<p>DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY</p> <p>Fully equip first responders, increase protection at our borders, secure our ports, implement 100 percent inspection of cargo entering the U.S., improve our domestic nuclear security, and protect our communities against a bioterrorist attack.</p>
<h3>National Security</h3>	<p>“From the beginning, America has sought international support for operations in Iraq, and we have gained much support.”</p>	<p>REPUBLICAN FAILURE</p> <p>Pursued a go-it-alone foreign policy that leaves us isolated abroad. American taxpayers are bearing almost all of the \$120 billion cost of the Iraqi operations and American troops are enduring almost all the casualties.</p>	<p>DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY</p> <p>Work with allies and international institutions, such as NATO and the United Nations, to secure the manpower and money necessary to build a secure and stable Iraq, and to secure poorly guarded nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons around the world.</p>
<h3>Veterans' Benefits</h3>	<p>NO MENTION</p>	<p>REPUBLICAN FAILURE</p> <p>Proposed \$28 billion in cuts to veterans' health and benefits over 10 years. Support elimination of health care services for 26,500 veterans and failed to provide promised \$1.8 billion for 2004. Left 348,000 veterans waiting for disability claims decisions. Proposed cutting \$1.5 billion from military housing and to reduce pay.</p>	<p>DEMOCRATS HAVE A BETTER WAY</p> <p>Ensure full payment of both retirement pay and disability compensation to 500,000 disabled military retirees immediately. Fully fund veterans health care. Support permanent pay increases and bonuses for soldiers in combat.</p>

